

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 5 of the Second Extraordinary Session
By Dixon

A RESOLUTION to honor the New Sardis Missionary Baptist Church in Shelby County and its congregation for 125 years of service to their Lord and community.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the good people of the New Sardis Missionary Baptist Church in Shelby County, who are celebrating their 125th anniversary on December 5, 1999, comprise one such congregation; and

WHEREAS, the congregation was organized in 1874 in Southeast Shelby County at 7739 Holmes Road. The land on which the initial edifice was constructed was purchased on December 3, 1874, only 11 years after the abolishment of slavery; and

WHEREAS, the first church officials purchased two acres of land from J.C. Stuart for the sum of fifty dollars. Approximately one year later worship was moved from the bush harbor to the new house of worship; and

WHEREAS, the first deacons were Henry Rhodes, Mont Carlton, and William Pierce; these spiritual pioneers paved the way for future generations to worship and serve God at New Sardis as the church is currently blessed with both senior and junior deacon boards; and

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WHEREAS, in the beginning the membership would gather once a month for “Third Sunday Worship Service”; members would walk to church from miles around or would travel by horse and buggy. The First Sunday of the Month Worship Service was added years later until the late 1950s (or early 60s) when the church started holding worship services every Sunday; and

WHEREAS, over the past one and a quarter centuries, the church has undergone some major changes. The first church building was heated with a wood- and coal-burning pot-belly stove with kerosene lamps for light. Water was carried inside in buckets and outhouses served as restrooms. Baptisms were conducted in neighborhood creeks and ponds as well; and

WHEREAS, since the church’s founders’ days, New Sardis has dug a baptismal pond and cistern on the church campus; the original church building has burned, been rebuilt, and later bricked. In 1978, a new sanctuary was also added; and

WHEREAS, the Lord has called several pastors to New Sardis over the years, including the Reverends Charlie Campbell, J.W. St. Clair, A.Y. Crutcher, Issac Cotton, Jessie Petties, and D.G. Gray; the church is now under the divine leadership and guidance of Dr. L. LaSimba M. Gray, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, the church has significantly contributed to the social, cultural, and economic vitality of the Germantown area, Shelby County, and the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the congregation of the New Sardis Missionary Baptist Church for their many years of service to God, their community, and the state, and extend to them our best wishes as they embark on their next 125 years of humble Christian service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.